



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: May 15, 2007

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: City Administrator's Office

SUBJECT: Citywide 9/80 Schedule

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve the implementation of a standard Citywide 9/80 work schedule by extending public service hours of many City offices, counters and operations and closing on alternating Fridays, effective on Monday, July 9, 2007.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

After a presentation to the Council in January on the City's Work Trip Reduction Incentive Program, an interdepartmental staff committee was formed to explore whether implementation of a 9/80 schedule in July 2007 for most offices, public counters, and operations was feasible. The committee completed such a study, and found that the desired air pollution, traffic congestion, and other benefits of a 9/80 schedule can be achieved without a significant negative impact on service to the public and employee productivity. Therefore, staff recommends that Council approve a plan to move to a Standard Citywide 9/80 schedule effective Monday, July 9, 2007.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The City's current standard office work schedule is a traditional 5-day, 40-hour week. Most City offices are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. placing many City employees on the freeway and roads at peak commute traffic hours. A growing number of City employees are commuting from outside the South Coast area.

REVIEWED BY: _____ Finance _____ Attorney

Agenda Item No. _____

The City allows voluntary compressed workweek arrangements, but only to the extent that this scheduling can be accomplished within current operational needs. Use of compressed work schedules is 54% overall, divided as follows:

- 92% of Fire, Police, & Airport Patrol employees;
- 46% of Community Development and Public Works employees; and
- 22% of employees in all other City Divisions

On January 23, 2007, staff made a presentation to Council on the City's Work Trip Reduction Incentive Program. A Citywide 9/80 compressed work schedule was one of seven program enhancements proposed for consideration.

A 9/80 schedule is one in which the work schedule remains 80 hours within the two week pay period, but employees work nine days instead of ten. Under a Citywide 9/80 compressed work week schedule, most administrative and public counters would be closed on alternating Fridays.

Implementation of a 9/80 schedule for most offices, public counters, and operations would help the City meet its sustainability goal of having 75% of its full-time employees on flexible work schedules, by allowing up to 440 additional employees to participate in compressed workweek scheduling.

9/80 Interdepartmental Staff Committee

The City Administrator's Office organized an interdepartmental committee with representatives from most of the departments and members from all levels of the organization from general employees to managers. The Committee's charge was to explore the feasibility of moving to a 9/80 schedule. The Committee's work included surveying other agencies, surveying the City's own departments, seeking input from employees and employee organizations, and developing an implementation plan and a public information campaign.

Agency Surveys

The Committee surveyed 33 agencies of similar size that have implemented a 9/80 work schedule and received 18 responses (See Attachment 1).

Overall, the surveys found that customers reacted positively to their extended service hours; and staff morale and recruitment efforts improved with the 9/80 schedule. Cities reported no negative impacts on productivity. Initially, there were some minor problems with members of the public trying to conduct business on closed Fridays and/or with staff resistance to a new schedule. Both issues were resolved, and current enthusiasm remains high at all agencies.

From these surveys the Committee also learned that it is critical to have a well planned public information campaign and to make sure any payroll issues are worked out and agreed to in advance.

Benefits & Challenges of a 9/80 Work Schedule

The benefits of a 9/80 work schedule, and challenges related to adopting such a schedule, were identified through the agency surveys and through interviews with City managers and department heads.

Some of the benefits identified were as follows:

1. A greater number of public service hours on Monday through Thursday, the busiest customer service days for most departments;
2. Reduced air pollution impact by 26 fewer round trip commutes per employee per year (potentially thousands of round trips per year);
3. Reduced congestion on freeways on alternate closed Fridays, the busiest freeway day of the week;
4. Potentially reduced commute impact during peak workday commute times through earlier or later scheduled start and finish times;
5. Enhanced recruitment and retention of employees, especially employees commuting from outside of the South Coast area;
6. Consolidation of current employee flex days off to a closed day, when operations will not be affected; and
7. Potential facilities energy savings.

Some of the challenges and solutions identified by the Interdepartmental Committee were:

1. The potential for public confusion, a challenge that can be minimized through a thorough public information campaign;
2. The need for public works project and building inspections, which the affected departments will handle through enhanced availability on non-closed days and limited availability of inspections on closed Fridays;
3. Individual employees' childcare and personal needs, which can be alleviated through early notice and/or flexible work arrangements under the City's Flex Work and Family Friendly policies;
4. Commuter bus schedules from the North County do not easily accommodate a 9-hour work day at this time, but this issue can be alleviated through minor adjustments to bus commuters' work schedules; and
5. Citywide deadlines falling on closed Fridays, which have been identified and will be changed.

Additional examples of challenges and solutions are contained in the attached Implementation Plan (Attachment 2, Section 4). The Committee concluded that none of the impacts of a Citywide 9/80 schedule are prohibitive to implementation.

Implementation of 9/80 Schedule

If Council approves the change to a 9/80 schedule, staff proposes that the compressed work schedule be implemented in July 2007, with the first 9-hour day occurring on Monday, July 9, and the first Friday when City offices are closed occurring on Friday, July 13. This date has been selected to allow time for a thorough public information campaign, and to allow for implementation without incurring any overtime expenses or payroll complications.

City Hall and many other Administrative Offices will now be open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the open Fridays.

Public Works and Community Development counters at 630 Garden Street will have the same morning and afternoon hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., but will now remain open at lunch times. Two-thirds of 172 respondents to a survey distributed by the Community Development Department indicated that the lunch hour, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., would be the most valuable additional public service time. Remaining open during lunch will lead to a net gain at 630 Garden Street of two customer service hours during every two week cycle, or 52 hours each year.

The City's Police and Fire operations, and other patrol functions and emergency services, will not be affected by the change.

Certain other offices and counters will remain open every Friday. Hours of operation for the Water and Wastewater Plants, the Waterfront Department, the Library Department, and Recreation programs and community centers will not change. Departments that do not close on alternate Fridays will attempt to schedule employees on a 9/80 or other compressed work week schedule as much as possible to assist with City goals.

A list of office hours and a list of Friday closures in 2007 are contained in the attached Implementation Plan (Attachment 2, Sections 1 and 2).

Public Information Campaign

A comprehensive public information campaign has been developed to inform the public of the changes in hours of operation. Staff proposes to minimize confusion by communicating with the public using a variety of media including water bill inserts, websites, City TV coverage, press releases, newspaper ads, posted signs, department newsletters, etc., in both English and Spanish. (See the attached Implementation Plan, Attachment 2, Sections 6 and 7). In addition, the change to a Citywide 9/80, and the value of compressed work schedules and alternative work arrangements in general, will be highlighted in an upcoming edition of *Inside Santa Barbara*.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Costs to implement this program will include the cost of a planned extensive two month information campaign, primarily including staff time, printing fees, and the cost of placing announcements in various publications.

No additional appropriations are necessary, as all costs will be absorbed in the current 2007 operating budget.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACTS:

The City has recognized that flexible work arrangements such as flexible work schedules and telecommuting reduce vehicle trips and ease traffic congestion that contribute to global warming. The City's sustainability goals include increasing the rate of participation in flexible work schedules to 75% of its employees. This change will have a significant positive effect on the City's ability to meet this goal.

ATTACHMENTS: 1. List of Survey Agencies
 2. Implementation Plan

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